Proper cleaning, care guarantees mask efficiency, effectiveness

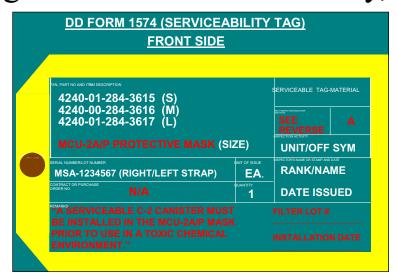
By Capt. James Kennedy 8th Civil Engineer Squadron

All personnel assigned to Kunsan are required to inspect their gas masks upon issue, every six months during peacetime, and every seven days during hostilities. At Kunsan, we consider STARTEX to be the onset of hostilities, which corresponds to the first wartime inspection of the mask.

The purpose of inspecting your gas mask is quite simply to ensure its serviceability should the need arise to use it. Dirt is the most common problem airmen at Kunsan have with their masks. Because of high use during exercises, sweat and salt deposits build up in the cracks and valves of the mask. The best way to clean your mask is to use warm soapy water and then rinse repeatedly with clean water. Use a soft-bristle tooth-brush to clean the hard-to-reach parts of the mask.

Refer to Page 7-1 of the January 2001 8th Fighter Wing Ability to Survive and Operate (ATSO) Guide for detailed inspection criteria for each mask component.

Examine all rubber parts for cracks, tears, deterioration, dryness and separation between rubber and metal parts. Pay particular attention to possible separation around the outlet valve. Check to make sure voice emit-



ters, retaining rings and other parts are tightly secured. Check head harness for elasticity. Inspect drinking tubes (visually and by drinking through it) for flow. Check protective hood and canister for physical damage. Examine front lens and lens cover for deep scratches or punctures.

If you find damage to any of these parts, or any of the parts as outlined in the ATSO Guide, you must either get

your mask replaced or make repairs immediately.

After the inspection, fill out the DD Form 1574, Mask Inspection Card. Look on Page 7-3 for details. Bottom Line – your gas mask will save your life when operating in a chemical environment, but only if it's in good condition. The first step is to clean your mask after every exercise, followed by a detailed mask inspection.

Capricorn (Dec. 22 - Jan. 19) Don't panic when you are chosen to perform self-aid and buddy care on your combat buddies. Chapter 11 in the ATSO Guide, and Page 111 in the Airman's Manual have information on different signs and treatment for injuries. If you are still uncertain, consider taking a refresher self-aid and buddy care class.

Aquarius (Jan. 20 - Feb. 18) – Aquarius looks out for others, but remember to save yourself first if you start showing signs of being affected by nerve agent. Also, remember not to use your own nerve agent auto-injectors on someone else.

For more information about using auto-injectors, read Chapter 10 in the ATSO Guide.

Pisces (Feb. 19 - March 20) — Pisces, you are known to hate violence, but it's no excuse not to call in that suspicious character you saw on your way to work. Don't assume someone else will make the call. You may have seen something someone else didn't.

Give a SALUTE report to your Unit Control Center and you could deter violence in your area.

Aries (March 21 - April 29) — Aries tend to get restless and don't like to sit still, but you must stay put in an Alarm Black until the Battle Staff authorizes movement. Remember the three phases of Alarm Black: base sweeps only, mission critical only and shift change. For more information about alarm conditions, look on Page 5-5 in the ATSO Guide, Page 67 in the Airman's Manual or call the 8th Civil Engineer Squadron Readiness Flight at 782-4849.

Taurus (April 30 - May 20) — Taurus loves exercises because they involve your best qualities — your love for action and challenges. Of course, exercises also highlight your two greatest faults — admitting failure and not taking other's advice. If you make a mistake Aries, it's okay. Learn and keep fighting. The inspectors also evaluate our attitude and how well we

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recover.

Gemini (May 21 - June 21) – Since Gemini loves to be clean, you have no problem going to the Contamination Control Area after you find out you're in a contaminated area after a chemical attack. However, where do you go if you're contaminated and wounded? Wounded personnel must be processed through the hospital.

For more information about contamination procedures, review Chapter 8 in the ATSO Guide.

Cancer (June 22 - July 22) — Even though you're not on the base sweep teams, Cancer, it's everyone's responsibility to look out for unexploded ordnances after an attack. If you see one, look on Page 6-1 in the ATSO Guide for step-by-step instructions on what to do and what to report to the Unit Control Centers or Survival Recovery Center.

Leo (July 23 - Aug. 22) – Leo, you love to be seen, but being in the spotlight can make you a target for enemy forces. Wear you reflective belt for safety reasons, but remember to black out windows. Cover shiny objects and lights on vehicles, but just enough to let light through, but not enough to be seen from a distance

For more information about black out procedures, look on Page 46 in the Airman's Manual.

Virgo (Aug. 23 - Sept. 22) – Virgos usually have a good memory, so remind your co-workers to inspect their gas mask every six months during peacetime. Inspect every seven days during wartime. This includes exercises. Also, remind them to properly fill out the DD Form 1574, Mask Inspection Card.

For more information about the form, look on Page 7-3 in the ATSO Guide, or ask a member of the

Exercise Evaluation Team.

Libra (Sept. 23 - Oct. 23) – Libras are known to be sensitive. In fact, wearing your gas mask seems to ruin your sensitive skin. However, cleaning your gas mask with liquid soap will prevent that. Be sure to remove the hood and canister before you begin. While cleaning your mask, it's the perfect time to inspect it, too. Look on Page 7-1 in the ATSO Guide for a checklist of what to inspect.

Scorpio (Oct. 24 - Nov. 21) – Feeling down Scorpio? Well there's nothing like the Code of Conduct to spark the patriotism back into a warrior. Article VI says, "I will never forget that I am an American, fighting for freedom, responsible for my actions, and dedicated to the principles which made my country free. I will trust in my God and the United States of America."

For more information on the Code of Conduct, see Page 2-2 in the January 2001 edition of Kunsan's Ability to Survive and Operate Guide, or Page 2 in the Airman's Manual.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22 - Dec. 21) – The upcoming Operational Readiness Inspection has you excited Sagittarius, however, don't forget the Laws of Armed Conflict when "playing war." You cannot attack medical personnel or enemy personnel who surrender, or misuse a protected symbol, such as a red cross, crescent or Star of David to get an advantage on the opponent. Not only can these violations hurt the Wolf Pack in the inspection, but in a real—world wartime environment you can be held accountable for your actions and be punished under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

For more information on LOAC see Page 18 in the Airman's Manual or call the legal office at 782-4284